

pany or platoon level does require imagination and enthusiasm.

- "What if the Omega platoon leader blows the mission?"

Unquestionably, this is the biggest risk in Omega training. (I would also venture to guess that it's also the fire behind the smoke of many of the other objections.)

I won't deny that Omega Force training is tough—it's tough on the platoon, but it's tougher on the leader, because he is responsible not only for flawless execution but also for the planning and legwork that is involved. And it is difficult for him to pontificate on the flaws of his subordinates after he has just led them on a pointless two-day walk in the woods. But as a leader, doesn't he run that risk reg-

ularly anyway?

Small mistakes here and there won't be fatal (in training is the place to make them), and an officer may actually gain an appreciation for the difficulties involved in his subordinates' jobs as well.

Of course, the converse is equally true—if an Omega mission is flawlessly executed, not only will the soldiers see how it is done, but now the leader's standards for them can become that much higher. Most important, Omega missions let a leader move from a "tell me" to a "show me" emphasis in his training, and the value of the training, cohesion, and mutual respect that this engenders can't be overstated.

I won't try to tell anyone that our

Omega missions were eagerly awaited or that we enjoyed them once they started, but we did learn from them. We learned how to run a mission, but just as clearly, we learned our battalion commander's theory on how to run a unit—in short, "from up in front." After all, isn't that the only place from which a leader can say "Follow me" and have it make sense?

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# The Deep-Battle Surgeon

MAJOR GEORGE W. CHAPPELL

An aerial fire support officer (AFSO) is *your* deep-battle surgeon. He is an artillery lieutenant or an artillery sergeant first class who, with an Army aviator, operates from an OH-58D helicopter.

The field artillery's use of an aerial observation platform is not new. Hot air balloons, for example, were used during the American Civil War to adjust artillery fire, and some type of aircraft has been used by U.S. artillerymen in every war since. In fact, the first home of Army aviation was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The OH-58D is a great improvement over balloons, of course, and even over the Vietnam-era observation helicopters. Basically a flying computer, or several computers, it leaves conventional aircraft system design behind. Using this advanced weapon system, an AFSO can acquire targets, and shoot, move, and communicate better than any artilleryman of the past.

The OH-58D is a high performance

helicopter with more than twice the horsepower of the OH-58A and OH-6 helicopters. The four-blade main rotor and the larger tail rotor give the pilot an agile machine. It is designed to operate in the nap-of-the-earth (NOE) terrain flight mode. In the battle area, the OH-58D can maneuver and survive better than any other U.S. Army helicopter.

The OH-58D is the first Army helicopter designed from the start to operate at night using light-intensifying night vision goggles. Too, the cockpit has special lighting so that the crew easily can see outside the aircraft and read the aircraft instruments in the dark.

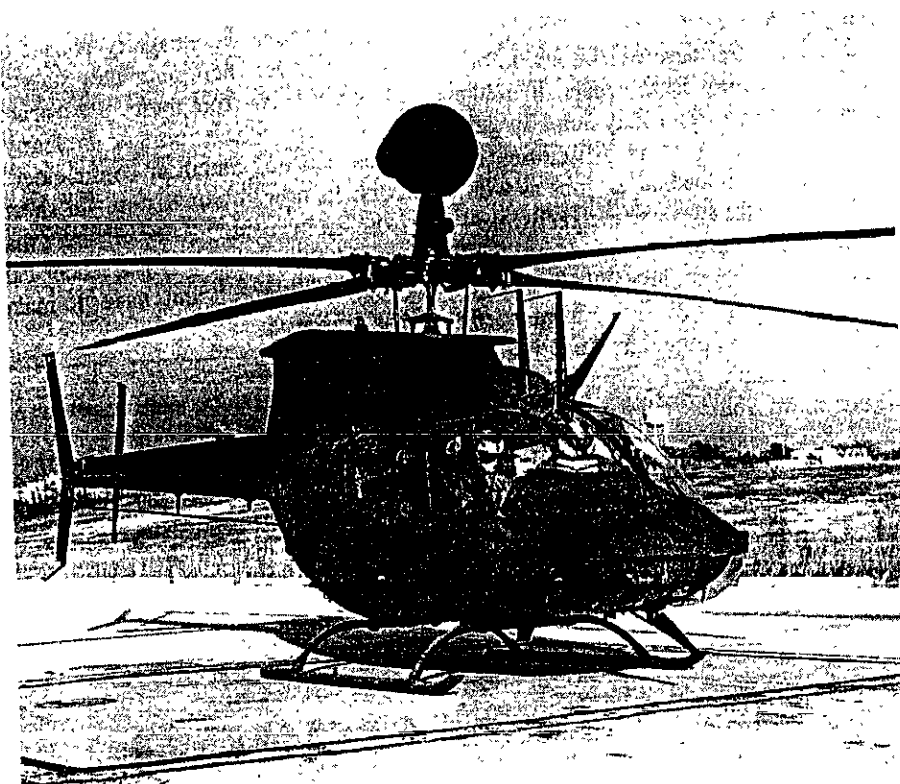
The most obvious feature on the OH-58D is the addition of a mast mounted sight (MMS). The sight is positioned above the rotor system, and this allows the crew to operate below masking terrain features. Coupled with the small size and reduced heat signature of the airframe, the MMS also permits the crew

to operate for extended periods without being detected.

The MMS has both television (TV) and thermal imaging sights (TIS) that permit the AFSO to acquire targets at ranges beyond seven kilometers, both during the day and at night. The AFSO therefore has little trouble seeing a target; his problem is finding the right fire support system to use on a particular target.

The well-stabilized sights give the AFSO several operating options. The MMS can point in any direction, regardless of the helicopter's orientation, and can point automatically to a preplanned location. When a target is detected, the MMS can lock onto it and continue to track it without further operator intervention.

Both the TV and thermal sights are used during the day, usually with both TV and TIS images displayed on two cockpit television screens. The heat signatures from armored vehicles and



The OH-58D has the most modern communication package of any Army fighting helicopter.

personnel are excellent target detection cues during the day, and even better ones at night. The TIS and the AN/AVS-6 night vision goggles (NVGs) give the AFSO tremendous night fighting capabilities. (Poor light discipline at night is quickly obvious when using the NVGs.)

Locating targets is easy using the MMS-equipped laser rangefinder with the on-board navigation system. This also gives the AFSO first-round-fire-for-effect accuracy. The OH-58D can store 20 preplanned targets, and the AFSO can recall any of them; when he does, the MMS will automatically point toward the target. When the AFSO acquires an actual target, he can have the MMS lock onto it and can send a digital call for fire with just a few button pushes.

The OH-58D has the most modern communication package in any Army fighting helicopter. It has four radios—two FM, one VHF, and one UHF. An AM-HF radio soon will be added. The OH-58D also has the airborne target handover system (ATHS), which “talks” digitally with TACFIRE as well as with other aircraft equipped with the system.

All the radios are controlled through two switches and the keyboard. The crew members can program their entire communications-electronics operation in-

structions (CFOD) into the system's memory. Changing radios or frequencies is simply an up or down on a switch.

Each crew member can communicate independently of the other, so that as the AFSO digitally calls for fire the pilot can talk at the same time by secure voice to the supported FSO.

When the AFSO locates a target with the MMS, the location is automatically loaded into the ATHS. For a trained AFSO, the time from target detection to the digital burst of the call for fire is only seconds.

The presence of the AFSO deepens the battle area—he stalks his prey and aims for long-range kills.

The AFSO can deliver any requested fire support munition on target quickly and accurately. The laser can designate for any allied, laser-guided munition, and can hand over a target to any other weapon system that has a laser spot tracker.

Fire adjustment from the air has always been relatively easier than adjustment from the ground. The AFSO is more than an extraordinary shooter, however. He is also a well-trained fire support coordinator and can perform limited fire support officer duties. He can advise a maneuver commander on all aspects of fire support and can quickly develop fire

support plans; he can alert other target acquisition assets and increase their survivability; he can be the eyes and ears of the commander synchronizing the fire support; he can make things happen quickly and accurately.

The AFSO gives the commander a means of delivering massed firepower anywhere on the battlefield. He can operate independently of the ground observers under the control of the FSO. He can be considered an aerial COLT (combat observation lasing team) and can operate in the deep, close, or rear areas. He can extend fire support observation and communications for deep operations, and can “trigger” our multiple launch rocket system (MLRS). Finally, he is the answer for quick, responsible observation of Level III threats in rear operations. Because the AFSO is the key to massing highly lethal firepower, he should be included in all Joint Air Attack Team (JAAT) or close air support (CAS) operations.

He is, indeed, your deep-battle surgeon.

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